CASE STUDY

Expanding Library Capabilities

How Brigham Young University Uses SirsiDynix APIs and Web Services to Support Powerful Custom Applications
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Ranked among the best university libraries in the United States, the Harold B. Lee Library (HBLL) at Brigham Young University houses over 6 million items across 98 miles of shelving. Over 10,000 patrons enter the HBLL each day, from students and professors to alumni and community members.

With so many users to serve, the HBLL requires powerful library automation software. BYU relies on SirsiDynix Symphony and BLUECloud to support their collection. Symphony is a powerful, dependable ILS, but in order to get exactly the solution they want, BYU sometimes chooses to make their own applications. That’s where SirsiDynix APIs and web services come in.

The openness and flexibility of the SirsiDynix ILS is important to the BYU team, as they work hard to create their own customized applications to better serve their students and faculty. Bertagnole works with a small team of programmers at the HBLL who design, create, and maintain applications that expand the traditional library experience. An important part of their work is integrating data from many different library and campus software solutions and “making sure all these applications play nice with each other.”

When asked about his favorite part of Symphony, HBLL software engineer Scott Bertagnole responded, “How open it is, first through the APIs and now through web services.”

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1 http://universe.byu.edu/2012/02/05/harold-b-lee-library-ranked-top-3-in-princeton-review/
We really feel that bringing all this data together makes our resources much more discoverable and meaningful to our patrons. So we rely heavily on Symphony APIs in our search engine. They allow us to leverage our ILS data as a key ingredient in this much larger recipe.”

Scott Bertagnole
Harold B. Lee Library software engineer
In addition to their search engine, BYU has also built a custom My Account page for their students and faculty. This unique application blends circulation data from the ILS with data from BYU’s other campus software to provide a powerful, unified source of account information. “Not only can we show our students what they have checked out, but we can display additional resources such as ILL requests and course reserve materials, and we can customize the experience for each student based on what classes they are currently taking.” Like the search engine, the My Account page relies heavily on the openness and power of SirsiDynix APIs and web services to bring library data beyond the traditional boundaries of the ILS.

**STABILITY & SPEED**

As BYU has integrated ILS data into more applications, the stability and speed of the APIs and web services has become increasingly important. The HBLL programming team happily reported that the APIs and web services have no problem handling large volumes of requests each day. In addition to appreciating the capability of the APIs themselves, Bertagnole noted his appreciation for the SirsiDynix team that built them. “Brent Thompson [Product Manager over Web Services] has been very responsive to the requests we’ve made. When we ask for a feature that we’ve been missing, the team has been very good about making it happen.” And what is the ultimate goal with APIs and web services? Using Symphony and BLUECloud’s open structure, Bertagnole and his team are transitioning the HBLL to a new model of library automation. “Historically, library technologies have focused on periodic bursts of automation, like nightly or monthly processes. The interactions with our data have to be more real-time, and that’s the strength of Web Services.”
Get in touch!

Would you be open to speaking with someone at SirsiDynix? Would you like to see our Web Services and APIs in action? We'd love to show you around our offerings so you can see what SirsiDynix can do for you and your library. Contact us today!

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